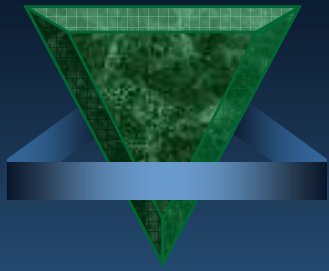


Considerations when Using RTI Models with Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students

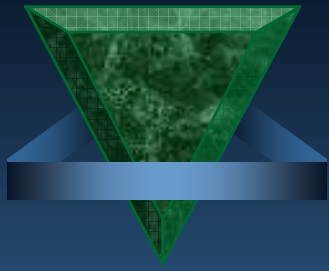
Janette Klingner

University of Colorado at Boulder,
National Center for Culturally Responsive Educational Systems



Response to Intervention Models

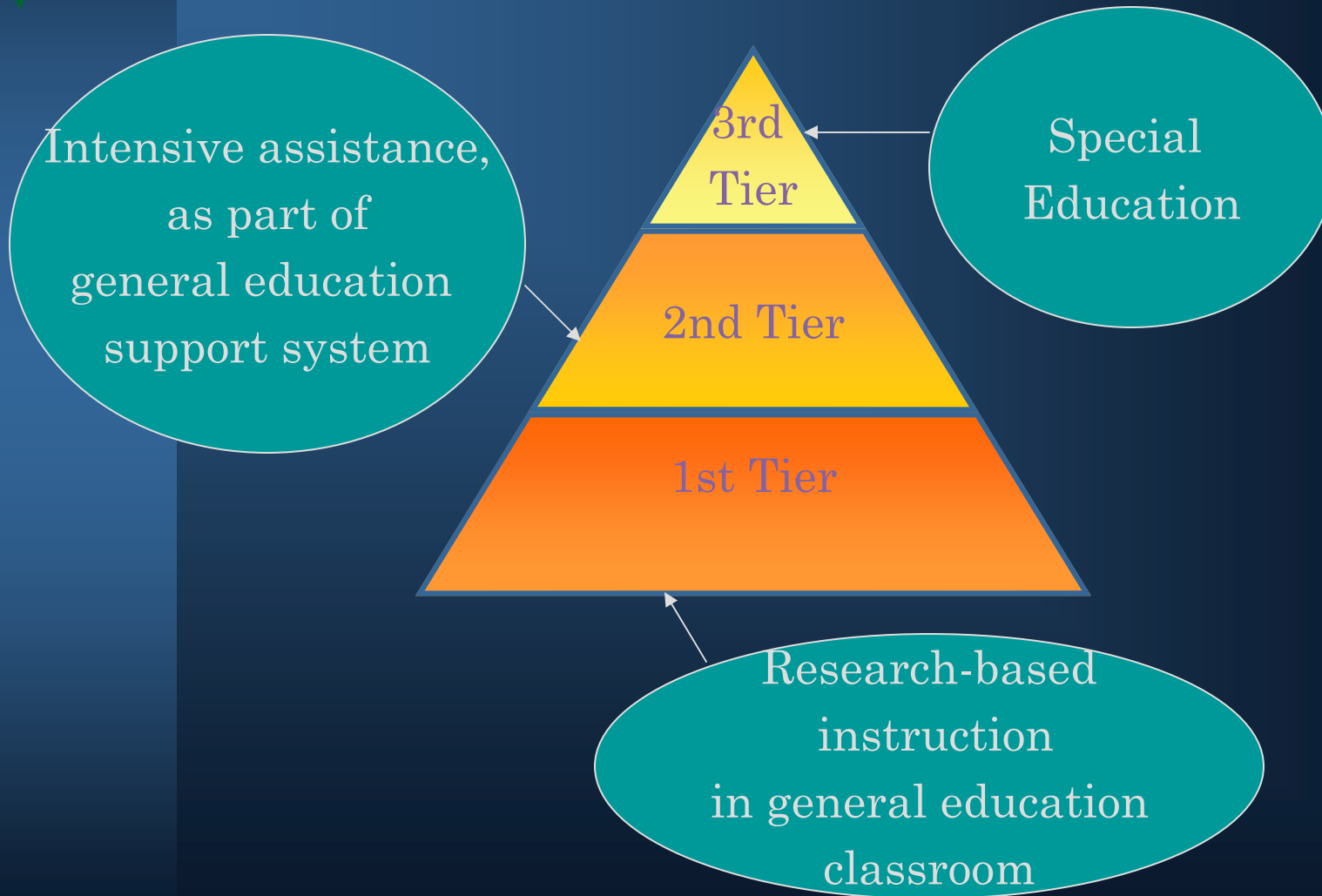
- ✓ In the newly reauthorized IDEA, eligibility and identification criteria for LD have changed [614(b)(6)(A)-(B)]:
 - *When determining whether a child has a specific learning disability*
 - *The LEA is not required to consider a severe discrepancy between achievement and intellectual ability.*
 - *The LEA may use a process that determines if a child responds to scientific, research-based intervention as part of the evaluation.*

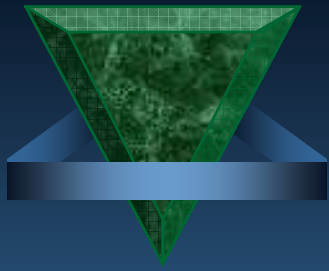


Response to Intervention Models

- ✓ Some critical issues we will discuss:
 - What should “*research-based interventions*” at the first and second tiers look like for culturally and linguistically diverse students?
 - What counts as research? We need to find out not only “*what works,*” *but what works with whom, by whom, and in what contexts.*
 - What should the RTI model look like for culturally and linguistically diverse students?

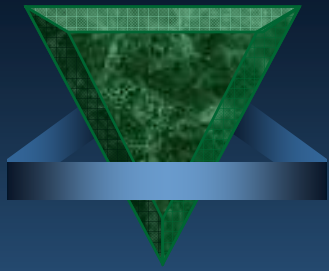
Response to Intervention: A Three-tiered Model





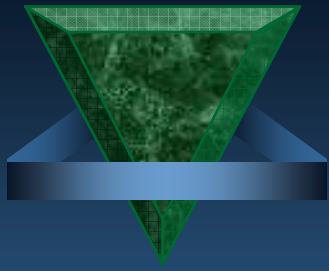
1st Tier

- ✓ Research-based instruction at the first tier is for all students and consists of explicit instruction in:
 - phonological awareness,
 - the alphabetic principle (letter-sound correspondence),
 - fluency with connected texts,
 - vocabulary development, and
 - comprehension.



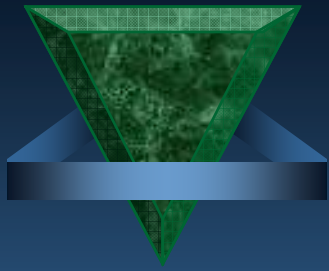
2nd Tier

- ✓ The second tier is only for those students who do not reach expected benchmarks using a progress-monitoring assessment instrument such as the DIBELS—the Dynamic Indicator of Basic Early Literacy Skills.
- ✓ Students receive additional intensive support in small groups or individually.
- ✓ This support is provided within *general education*.
- ✓ Students may receive this additional support in their classrooms or in a different setting.



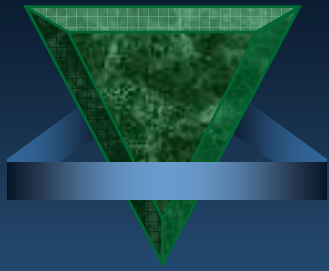
3rd Tier

- ▼ Students who continue to struggle are then provided with a third tier or level of assistance that is more intensive. It is this third tier many would consider to be special education.



Critical Issues

- ✓ The RTI model presumes that if a child does not make adequate progress with intensive research-based instruction, he or she must have an internal deficit of some kind.
 - *How do we ensure that the child has in fact received culturally responsive, appropriate, quality instruction?*
 - As with earlier identification criteria, this model *must* be based on students having received an adequate “*opportunity to learn.*”

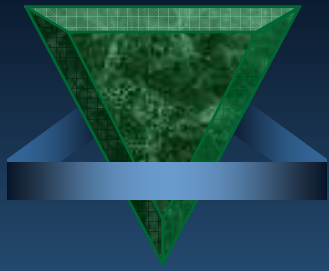


What Do We Mean by “Research-based”?

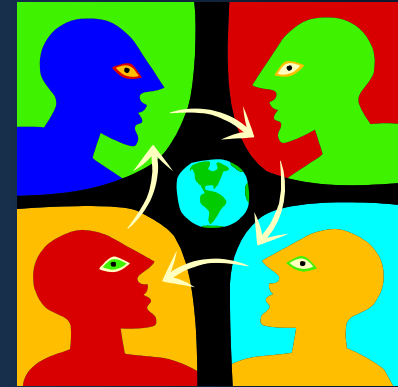
- ✓ The RTI model is based on the principle that instructional practices or interventions at each level should be based on scientific research evidence about “what works.”
- ✓ However, it is essential to find out *what works with whom, by whom, and in what contexts*—

One size does not fit all.

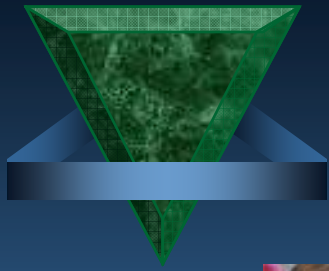




Reflection & Discussion



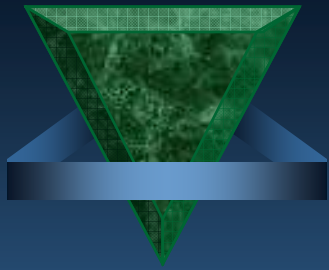
1. What does it mean when we say a practice is “research-based”? *What assumptions do we make?*
2. How do we account for language and culture when designing interventions, conducting research, and generalizing findings?
3. What kinds of questions do we need to ask as researchers and / or “consumers” of research?



What Counts as Research?



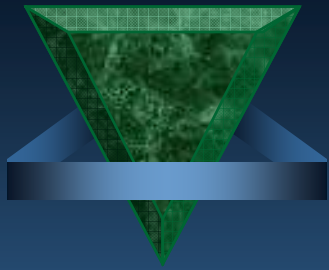
- ✔ We promote a broader view of what counts as research and what sorts of empirical evidence are relevant to complex issues that involve culture, language, social interaction, institutions, and cognition (Gee, 2001).
- ✔ This is particularly important as we move to RTI models.



What Counts as Research?

- ✔ We value qualitative and mixed methods approaches able to answer questions about complex phenomena that help us:
 - understand essential contextual variables that contribute to the effectiveness of an approach,
 - increase our awareness of implementation challenges, and
 - provide information about the circumstances under which and with whom a practice is most likely to be successful.

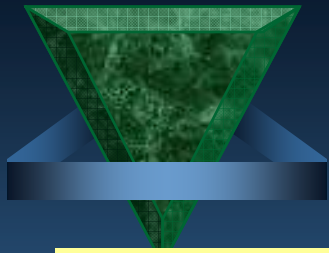




What Counts as Research?

- ✓ Much can be learned by observing in schools and classrooms where culturally and linguistically diverse students excel as readers.





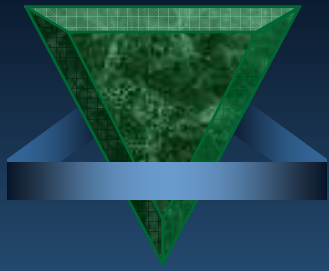
In first grade classrooms that included ELLs.....

THE MOST EFFECTIVE TEACHERS:

- ✔ had sophisticated knowledge of *reading instruction* as well as *second language* instruction.
- ✔ were able to draw on the *prior knowledge* of struggling readers and *make connections* with what they already knew.



Graves, Gersten, and Haager (2004)

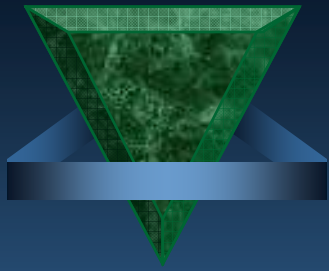


In first grade classrooms that included ELLs, the most effective teachers....



- ✓ emphasized *explicit* instruction in word identification, phonological awareness, and vocabulary instruction.
- ✓ provided *structured* opportunities to practice English.
- ✓ provided *supportive* learning environments in which students were *highly engaged*.

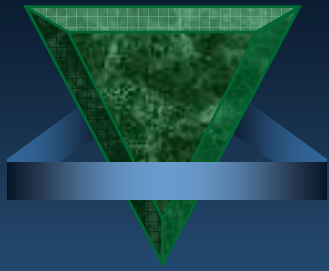
Graves, Gersten, and Haager (2004)



Research-based Interventions: What Works With Whom, By Whom, and In What Contexts?



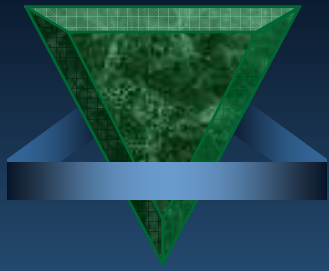
- ✓ These issues of population validity and ecological validity are essential if research results are to be generalized - *yet frequently seem to be ignored.*
- ✓ Experimental research studies tell us what works best with the majority of students, not *all* students.



With Whom?



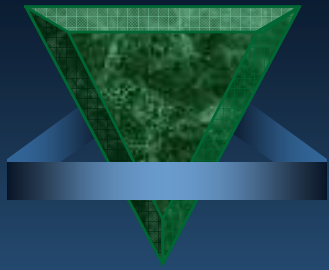
- ✔ When deciding if a practice is appropriate for implementation as part of an RTI model, it should have been validated with students like those with whom it will be applied.
- ✔ Although the National Reading Panel report “**did not address issues relevant to second language learning**” (2000, p. 3), the report’s conclusions are commonly cited as support for Reading First initiatives for all students.



With Whom?

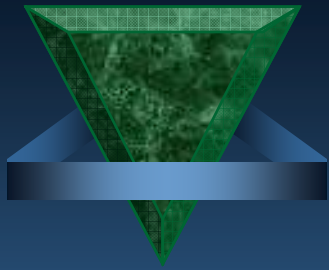
- ✓ Research reports should include information about:
 - the language proficiency, ethnicity, life experiences (e.g., socio-economic, specific family background, immigration status)
 - Data should be disaggregated to show how interventions respectively might differentially affect students from diverse backgrounds.





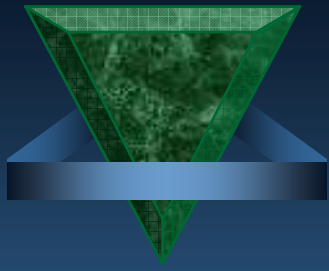
With Whom?

- ✔ **When research studies do not include culturally and linguistically diverse student populations, or fail to disaggregate data based on important variables, what does this say regarding the researcher's assumptions about what matters, who counts, and what works?**
 - English language learners are often omitted from participant samples because of their limited English proficiency.
 - Yet language dominance and proficiency are important research variables and can affect treatment outcomes.
 - Leaving students out of studies limits the external validity and applicability of such studies, especially for teachers who have ELLs in their classes.



With Whom?

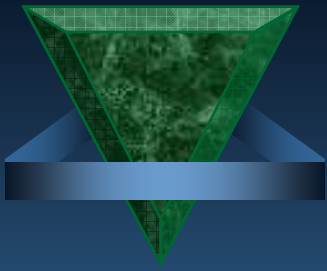
- ✔ What does it mean when ELLs do not respond to “research-based” instruction?
 - To what extent might students be struggling because of limited English proficiency?
 - Has adequate support in English language development been provided?
 - To what extent has the “research-based” instruction been validated with ELLs?
 - Are most of the ELLs in the classroom succeeding, while just one or two are not? Or are most ELLs struggling?
- ✔ How should we decide what additional support to provide?



By Whom?

- ✓ On-going analyses of general education classrooms should be an **essential** component of RTI models.
- ✓ School personnel should first consider the possibility that students are not receiving adequate instruction before it is assumed they are not responding because they have deficits of some kind.

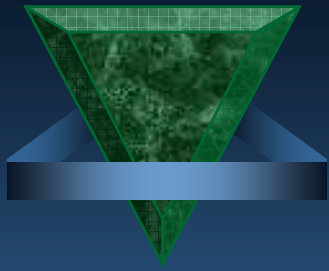




By Whom?

- ✔ We must observe in classrooms and note the:
 - **Quality of instruction**
 - **The relationship between a teacher and students**
 - **How culturally and linguistically diverse students are supported**
 - **How the teacher promotes interest and motivation**
- ✔ What do we conclude about students' opportunities to learn?





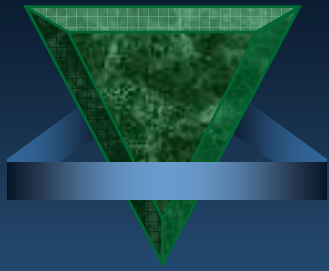
By Whom?

✔ Is the teacher...

- knowledgeable about second language acquisition?
- knowledgeable about bilingual education and English as second language (ESL) teaching methods?
- skilled in effective intervention and assessment procedures for culturally and linguistically diverse students?

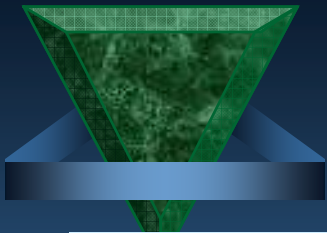
✔ Does the teacher...

- have the attributes of culturally responsive teachers?
- build positive, supportive relationships with students?
- work well with students' families and the community?
- collaborate well with other professionals?
- help most culturally diverse students succeed to high levels?



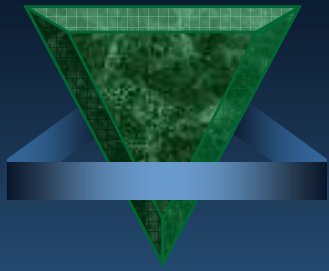
In What Contexts?

- ✔ It is essential to examine school contexts when implementing RTI models.
 - A student can be considered at-risk at one time and not at another, in one class but not in another, and in one school but not in another (Richardson & Colfer, 1990).
 - Are there culturally diverse children in some schools who respond favorably to an intervention and comparable culturally diverse children in another school who do not respond as well?



In What Contexts?

- Variations in program implementation and effectiveness across schools and classrooms are common (see the First Grade Studies for a classic example, Bond & Dykstra, 1967).
 - What is occurring when this happens?
 - Is it the program, the teachers' implementation, or the school context?
 - What is it about the system that facilitates or impedes learning?
 - Schools are dependent on larger societal influences that should not be ignored.



In What Contexts?

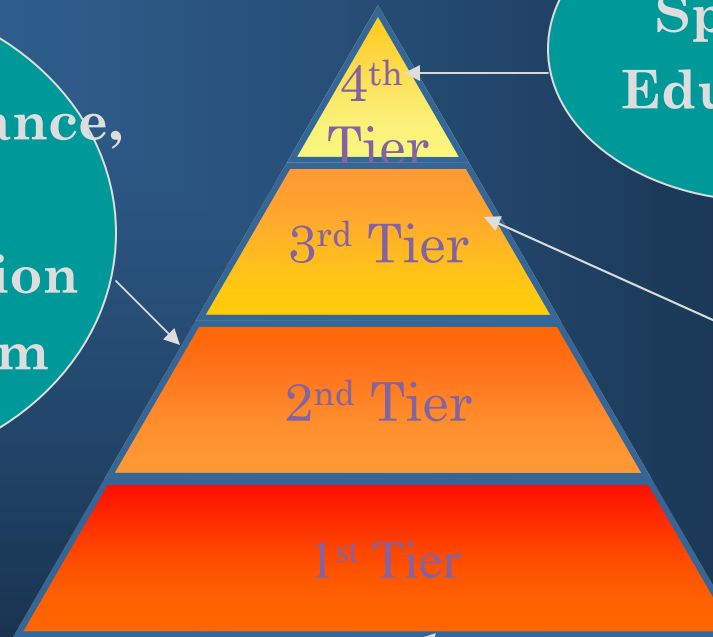
- ✔ To conclude that failure resides within students when they do not progress with a certain intervention, and then move them onto the second or third tier in an RTI model or decide they belong in special education *without considering other factors is problematic.*





Revised RTI Model

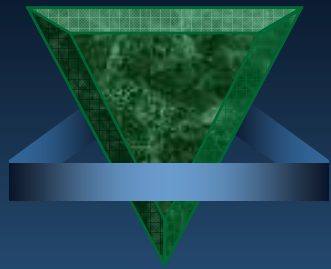
Intensive assistance,
as part of
general education
support system



Special
Education

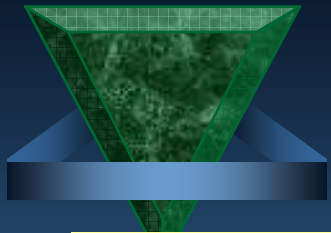
Referral
to a Child
Study Team or
Teacher Assistance
Team

Culturally responsive
instruction
in general education
classroom



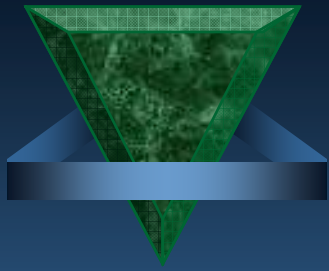
1st Tier

- ✓ The foundation of the first tier should be culturally responsive, quality instruction with on-going progress monitoring within the general education classroom.
- ✓ We see this first tier as including two essential components:
 - (a) research-based interventions, and
 - (b) instruction by knowledgeable, skilled teachers who have developed culturally responsive attributes



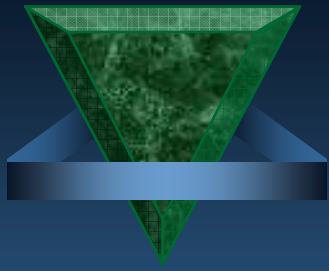
Culturally Responsive RTI Model

- ✔ In their teacher education programs as well as through ongoing professional development, teachers should become familiar with:
 - instructional strategies linked to academic growth for culturally and linguistically diverse students,
 - the language acquisition process and the unique needs of ELLs, and
 - assessment procedures for monitoring progress, particularly in language and literacy.
- ✔ Teachers need to know if their interventions are effective and how to adjust instruction for students who do not seem to be responding.



Culturally Responsive Literacy Instruction

- ✓ What does it mean to provide *culturally* responsive literacy instruction?
- ✓ *All* practice is culturally responsive—but responsive to which culture(s)?
- ✓ Culture is involved in all learning.
- ✓ Culture is not a static set of characteristics located within individuals, but is fluid and complex.



Culturally Responsive Literacy Instruction

Includes explicit instruction in phonological awareness, the alphabetic code, fluency, vocabulary development, comprehension strategies.

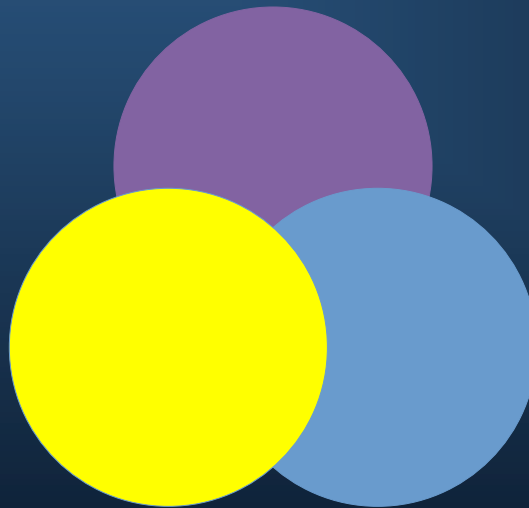
Explicit

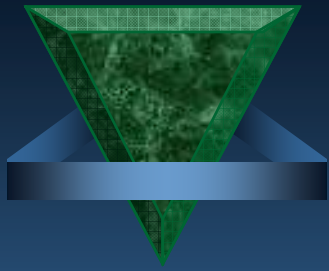
Emphasizes cultural relevance and builds on students' prior knowledge, interests, motivation, and home language.

Relevant

Includes frequent opportunities to practice reading with a variety of rich materials in meaningful contexts.

Multifaceted





✓ But, culturally responsive instruction goes beyond these basic components. In conceptualizing culturally responsive literacy instruction, we draw upon Wiley's (1996) framework for working with diverse students and families:

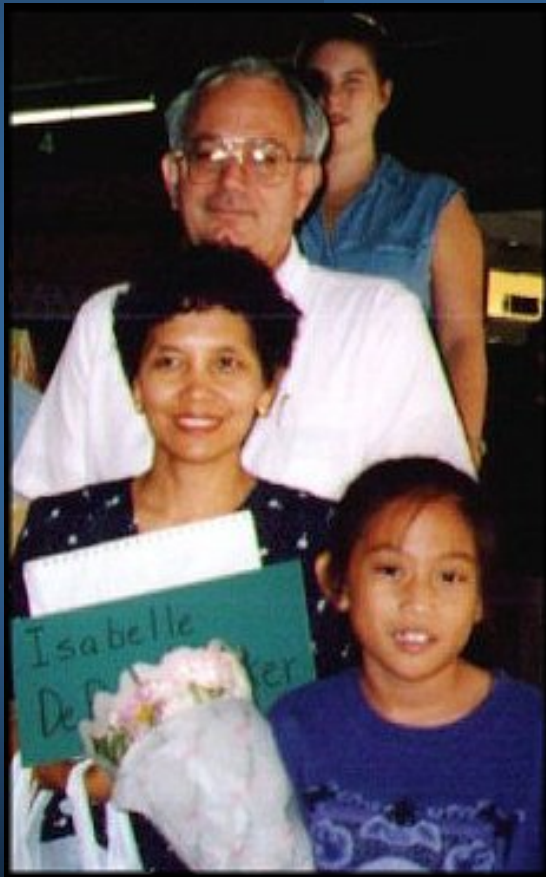
- *accommodation,*
- *incorporation,* and
- *adaptation.*

Accommodation requires teachers and others to have a better understanding of the communicative styles and literacy practices among their students and to account for these in their instruction.

- ✔ “Literacy learning begins in the home, not the school ... instruction should build on the foundation for literacy learning established in the home” (Au, 1993, p. 35).
- ✔ Several qualitative studies have shown that, even in conditions of substantial poverty, homes can be rich in print and family members engage in literacy activities of many kinds on a daily basis.



Incorporation requires studying community practices that have not been valued previously and incorporating them into the curriculum.

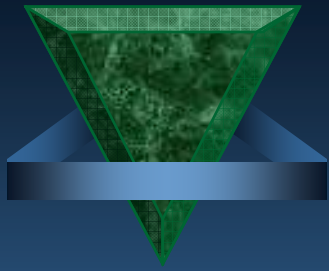


- ✔ “We must not assume that we can only teach the families how to do school, but that we can learn valuable lessons by coming to know the families, and by taking the time to establish the social relationships necessary to create personal links between households and classrooms” (Moll, 1999, p. xiii).
- ✔ “Teachers and parents need to understand the way each defines, values, and uses literacy as part of cultural practices--such mutual understanding offers the potential for schooling to be adjusted to meet the needs of families” (Cairney, 1997, p. 70).

Adaptation involves the expectation that children and adults must acculturate or learn the norms of those who control the schools, institutions, and workplace.

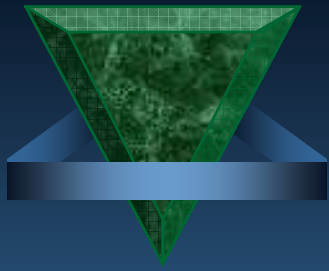
- ✔ Culturally and linguistically diverse parents **want** to give their children linguistic, social, and cultural capital to deal in the marketplace of schools, but are unsure how to go about doing this.
- ✔ “When schools fail to provide parents with factual, empowering information and strategies for supporting their child’s learning, parents are even more likely to feel ambivalence as educators [of their own children]” (Clark, 1988, p. 95).





- ✓ Wiley's framework can be used as a backdrop for helping us think about culturally responsive literacy instruction and RTI models.
 - It is not enough to implement isolated evidence-based interventions.
 - Instructional methods do not work or fail as decontextualized practices, but only in relation to the socio-cultural contexts in which they are implemented.





Reflection & Discussion

1st Tier

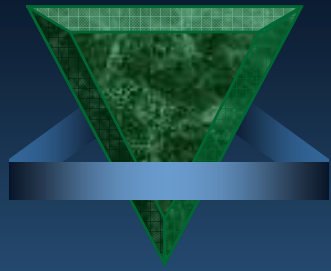
1. What should the first tier look like for culturally and linguistically diverse students?
2. Who should be responsible for making sure students are receiving opportunities to learn at the first tier?
3. What can you do in your role to make sure Tier 1 includes culturally responsive instruction?



2nd Tier

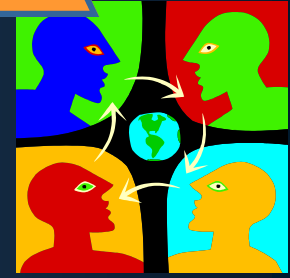
- ✓ When students have not made adequate progress when taught using appropriate, culturally responsive methods, a second tier of intervention is warranted.
- ✓ This tier is characterized as providing a level of intensive support that supplements the core curriculum and is based on student needs as identified through progress monitoring.



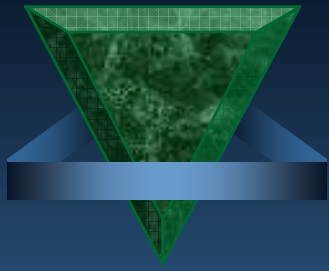


2nd Tier

Reflection & Discussion



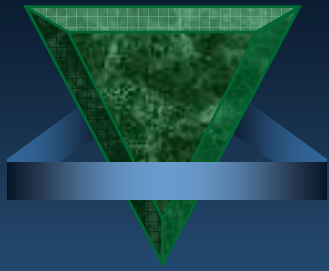
1. What should Tier 2 look like for culturally and linguistically diverse students?
2. Should Tier 2 interventions be individualized or the same for ALL learners at the Tier 2 level?
3. Who should provide Tier 2 interventions, with what preparation?
4. Where should interventions take place?
5. What funds should be used to provide these services?



3rd Tier

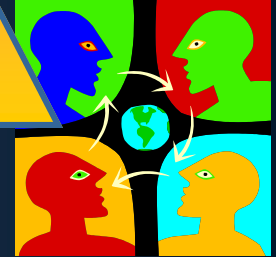
- ✓ This phase starts with a referral to a Teacher Assistance Team or a Child Study Team.
- ✓ This step should *overlap* with the second tier (i.e., the provision of intensive support should not stop for a referral to begin).



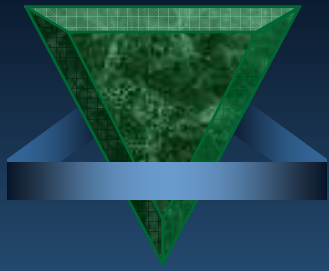


Reflection & Discussion

3rd Tier



1. What aspects of the *traditional* referral process should be kept? What needs to be changed?
2. Who should be on the TAT or CST or other team? For what purpose? What should be the role of the:
 - Classroom teacher?
 - Parent?
 - Special education teacher?
 - Psychologist?
 - English language acquisition specialist?
3. How should “response to intervention” data be used?
4. What further assessments should be done at this level?
5. What additional data should be collected?

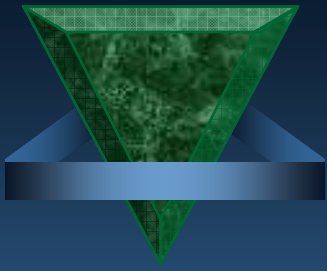


3rd Tier

- ✓ The make-up of the team should be diverse and include members with expertise in culturally responsive instruction, and, if appropriate, expertise in English language acquisition and bilingual education.



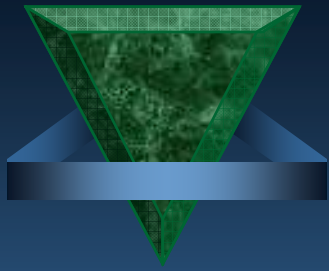
Data-based Decision-Making



3rd Tier

- Teams should determine how to alter the support a student has been receiving and develop specific instructional objectives based on student performance and other *data*.
- An important role for the team should be observing the student in her classroom as well as in other settings.

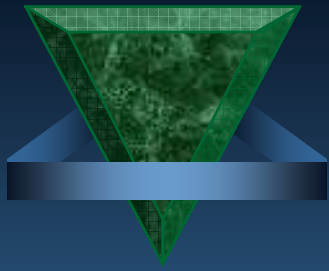




4th Tier

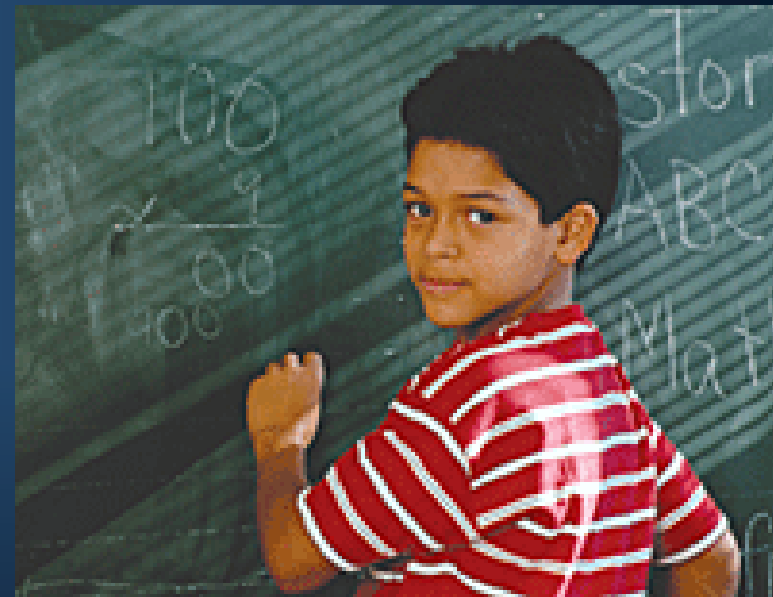
- ✓ In the model we propose, this tier would be special education.
- ✓ The hallmark of instruction at this level is that it is tailored to the individual needs of the student, and is even more intensive than at previous tiers.

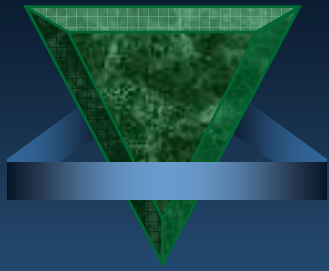




RTI Models Represent a New Beginning

- We are encouraged by the potential of RTI models to improve educational opportunities culturally and linguistically diverse students.
- RTI models represent a new beginning and a novel way of conceptualizing how we support student learning: along a continuum rather than categorically.

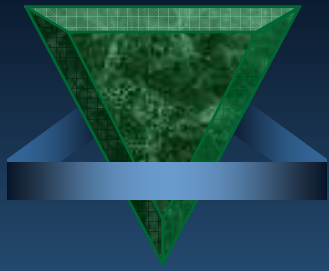




Need for Ongoing Dialogue about Critical Issues

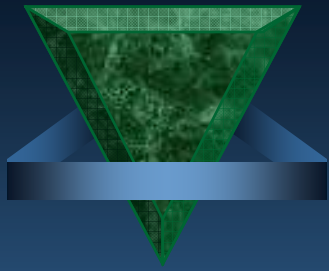
- ✔ At the same time, we are concerned that if we do not engage in dialogue about critical issues, RTI models will simply be like old wine in a new bottle, in other words, just another deficit-based approach to sorting children.
- ✔ It is our responsibility to make sure this does NOT happen.





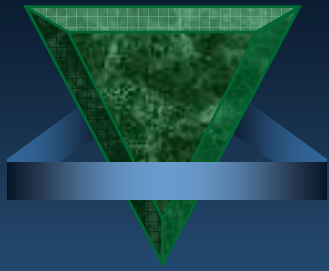
Closing thoughts...

- ✔ What would an effective RTI model for culturally and linguistically diverse students look like?
- ✔ How will we know when we have succeeded?



Related Readings

- ✔ Klingner, J. K., & Edwards, P. (2006). Cultural considerations with response-to-intervention models. *Reading Research Quarterly, 41*, 108-117.
- ✔ Klingner, J.K., & Bianco, M. (2006). What is special about special education for culturally and linguistically diverse students with disabilities? In B. Cook & B. Schirmer (Eds.), *What is special about special education?* Austin, TX: PRO-ED.
- ✔ Klingner, J. K., Sorrells, A. M., & Barrera, M. (in press). Three-tiered models with culturally and linguistically diverse students. In D. Haager, S. Vaughn, and J. Klingner (Eds.), *Validated reading practices for three tiers of intervention*. Baltimore, MD: Brookes.



For more information...

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